



NORTH DAKOTA
DEPARTMENT *of* HEALTH

NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release:
Dec. 15, 2008

For More Information, Contact:
Kimberlie Yineman
Oral Health Program
North Dakota Department of Health
Phone: 701.328.4930

OR
Brent Holman
American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry
Phone: 701.232.1148

OR
Linda Rorman
Head Start State Collaboration Office
North Dakota Department of Human Services
Phone: 701.328.1711

Head Start Dental Home Initiative Formed To Address Childhood Tooth Decay

BISMARCK, N.D. – The North Dakota Department of Health, North Dakota Department of Human Services and American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry (AAPD) today announced a new partnership to address childhood tooth decay, the most common chronic disease of childhood.

Called the American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry Head Start Dental Home Initiative, the partnership will work to establish dental homes for children enrolled in Head Start in North Dakota. Dr. Brent Holman, Fargo, N.D., has been named the coordinator for the North Dakota initiative.

Statistics show that children from families with low incomes suffer a higher rate of tooth decay than their more affluent counterparts, according to Kimberlie Yineman, director of the Department of Health's Oral Health Program. Nationwide, Head Start programs have identified poor oral health as the single most important health issue they are facing.

-- more --

600 E. Boulevard Ave. Dept. 301, Bismarck, North Dakota 58505-0200
Phone: 701.328.2372 Fax: 701.328.4727 E-mail: health@nd.gov

Visit the health department home page at www.ndhealth.gov.

“The emphasis placed on oral health by the Head Start Program reflects an understanding that oral health education, prevention, and early diagnosis and treatment contribute to a child’s healthy development,” Yineman said.

The goal of the partnership is to help establish dental homes for the more than 3,600 children enrolled in Head Start and Early Head Start in North Dakota. Although the initiative will not directly fund any dental services, it will develop a network of pediatric and general dentists to partner with Head Start. Teams of dentists and Head Start personnel will be trained in optimal oral health care practices and ways to develop partnerships in their communities to help overcome challenges that many Head Start families face when trying to access dental care for their children.

“A dental home ensures an ongoing relationship between the child and the dental team,” Dr. Holman said. “The dentist provides children with oral health care that is comprehensive, accessible, coordinated and family-centered.”

Current Head Start performance standards require that children receive a dental exam and have a dental home to ensure an ongoing comprehensive source of care for the children, according to Linda Rorman, Head Start State Collaboration Office administrator.

“This new initiative will benefit thousands of children in North Dakota and closely aligns with our overall mission and goals – to provide high quality health and dental services to the children we serve,” Rorman said.

For more information about the American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry Head Start Dental Home Initiative, contact Kimberlie Yineman, North Dakota Department of Health, at 701.328.4930; or Dr. Brent Holman, American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry, at 701.232.1148; or Linda Rorman, North Dakota Department of Human Services, at 701.328.1711.

-- 30 --

Please note: To access archived news releases and other information, visit the North Dakota Department of Health Press Room at www.nddohpressroom.gov.